ALEMANY

PASTORAL LETTER

1869

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Pastoral Letter

OF

JOSEPH S. ALEMANY, O. P.

ARCHBISHOP OF SAN FRANCISCO,

TO THE

FAITHFUL OF HIS DIOCESE.

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To the Clergy and Laity

OF THE

Diocese of San Francisco.

Dearly Beloved:

Being about to leave for the Holy City, in obedience to the voice of the Vicar of Christ, to bear witness to your faith at the approaching Vatican Council, we deem it important to address you in our usual familiar style, on the occasion of this extraordinary event. And first we humbly and earnestly solicit your constant prayers to the Holy Spirit, that through the intercession of her whom Heaven proclaimed full of his grace, and through the infinite merits of Christ's passion and death, light and grace may be abundantly imparted to the Bishops of the Catholic world assembled around the Chair of St. Peter, and thus their deliberations, when confirmed by that Chair, may strengthen our minds with divine light, may captivate erring reason to do homage to faith, and point out to society the paths that are for its good, and the serious evils which it should avoid.

It is a most disastrous evil, that the creature should oppose the Creator, as if determined to make

to itself another god besides the one that gave it existence. And yet, there can be but one God ; for if there were two, the difference would show one possessing something not possessed by the other, who would then necessarily be an inferior—limited being, and consequently no God. Under the name of God, we mean an infinitely perfect being, the ocean and source of all existence, by whose infinite wisdom and power all things were made, are preserved and governed. This makes all creatures dependent on him, and demands that all intelligent beings should humbly acknowledge him as their Supreme Lord, and should gratefully offer him the tribute of religious worship. Lucifer, too proud to submit, raised the cry of rebellion, and seduced many angels to join his plot, for which, he and his adherents were forever reprobated by the Divine Justice. Continuing in the same rebellious spirit, the enemy of God has ever tried to seduce men from their obligations to their Creator. He has incessantly endeavored to persuade them, that they have great powers of intellect, that they possess within their reach all the elements of greatness, power, order, perfection and happiness ; that independence is their greatness and felicity, and that submission to authority, human or divine, is ignoble degradation, enslaving their minds and crushing their greatness, to be resisted by all kinds of means.

But what happiness did accrue to the representatives of the human race, from Lucifer's first essay on

man's emancipation from authority? You shall be like Gods (said he to them); you shall become a sort of omniscient divinities, great, immortal, and happy, if you only have the manliness to throw off the yoke of submission. The thousand miseries that beset humanity at every step, invariably followed by the humiliations of death, are the key to the right understanding of the deceiver's wiles then and ever since. For many ages have the greatest philosophers tried the enchanting theories of the mind's emancipation—reason's independence from God—man's self-sufficient power to climb, unaided, the heights of virtue, perfection, and felicity. What has been the result? What mighty benefits does history record having flowed from their labors to the human race? What blessings to families? what stability to society? what check to vice? what proficiency in virtue? what honesty? what happiness? In a word, let us arraign man before himself, and ask him what results have accrued to religion, morality and society, by his emancipation from divine authority? The answers from history to these questions are most humiliating and appalling. Unable or unwilling to adore the one God that made him, man, unaided by divine revelation, shamefully bent his knee in adoration not only to created intelligent beings, but also to dumb animals, to the vegetables of his gardens, to the works of his own hands, and, what is worse, to the personifications of the most brutal passions; and this, even, in those countries that seemed to be the most enlightened.

Egypt, one of the earliest civilized nations of antiquity, whose numerous remains attest even at this day, its former splendor, worshipped the heavenly bodies and earthly plants, and all kinds of beasts and fishes and monsters.[1] The Phenicians, justly admired as most expert in commerce and navigation, among other false gods, adored Hercules and Jupiter.[2] Assyria, the first of great empires, with its Babylon, the most magnificent city of ancient times, erected temples to Venus and paid divine honor to Baal, even with the sacrifice of human victims, countenanced and directed by civil authority.[3] Greece, most celebrated for its progress in human learning, exerting to the present day vast influence by its arts, sciences and literature, adored the incestuous Jove, the drunkard Bacchus, and the impure Venus.[4] Rome, the mistress of the world, the home of all that was wise and artistic in antiquity, the patroness of cultivated reason, philosophy, and eloquence, became also the home of the idolatry of the world; for, not contented with having within its walls four hundred and twenty temples dedicated to idols, it erected besides a magnificent pantheon in honor of all the gods.[5] The history of mythology is the history of the impious degradation of the human mind when emancipated from divine revelation.

It is easy to perceive that such pantheism could not exert a good influence on the morals of the peo-

1. Juvenalis Sat. 15. 2. Calmet Dict. 3. Id. ib.
4. Aug. De Civ. Dei, &c. 5. Edward's Encyclopedia.

ple ; for the divine honors paid to immoral gods, naturally led to view vice without scruple, and to practice immorality. Thus, in Egypt we see woman losing virtue with glory rather than with remorse, and her marrying with a brother recognized by law.[6] By law the Babylonian women were required to do honor to the gods by their dishonor.[7] Corinth and Athens had thousands of priestesses to do the same honors.[8] In fact, so revolting were their religious rites, particularly on the feasts called Floral, Lupercal, Aphrodisian, Bacchanalian, and the nocturnal ones dedicated to Kotis, that they would beggar belief were they not stated by Lactantius, Titus Livius, St. Augustine, and similar authorities. We may add the following from Mosheim and Grotius, on the subject : "Some gods had animals, others had men, offered in sacrifice to them. Vicious and most impious were the lives of the upper, middle and lower classes, and they committed with impunity crimes and horrors that decent ears cannot now bear to hear named."[9] "Almost everywhere on earth the pagan rites were full of cruelty—almost everywhere, human blood was shed to appease the gods ; nor did the Roman laws prevent this. The most sacred solemnities of Ceres and Bacchus were filled with obscenity ; the days sacred to the gods were honored with spectacles which even Cato was ashamed to witness."[10] It is unnecessary to ask, what benefit

6. Sextus Empiricus, Pyr. Hip. Nat. Alexand. 3.
7. Herodotus, Lib. 1, n. 199. 8. Athenaeus Deipn. L. 13. Strabo L. 8 and 12.
9. Mosheim Histor. ch. 1, sec 11 and 21. 10. Grotius De Veritas, Rel. chr. lib. 2.

could society derive from such religion and pagan customs?

But this we are asked by those who aim at the freedom of man's mind from the guide of divine authority: Did not the pagan philosophers show by their teachings and their lives, that man can be good and virtuous without divine revelation? Their teachings and their lives show quite the contrary. Solon, according to Plutarch, legalized incest, and taught by word and example that happiness consists in courting Venus and Bacchus.[11] Lycurgus, according to Plato, sanctioned the murdering of innocent, defenceless-slaves, and died himself a suicide.[12] Zenon and Cato died the same death.[13] Lucretius was a beastly epicurean in theory and practice.[14] Pythagoras supported with lies his doctrine of the transmigration of the souls.[15] Socrates allowed himself to be ruled by an evil spirit, is charged with inconstancy by Plato, with avarice by Cicero, and with great pride generally by all.[16] Seneca practiced extortion and illicit loves.[17] The divine Plato taught the communism of women, the right of parents to kill their children if found deformed, and sanctioned intoxication if done out of devotion.[18] Aristotle advised the poisoning of his great benefactor, Alexander the Great, and after having lived with several lewd companions, and made one of them a goddess, he made himself a suicide.[19] Cicero himself, the great apostle of reason and the prince of

11. DeFelier Biogr. univ. 12. Id. ib. 13. Id. ib. 14. Id. ib.
15. Id. ib. 16. Id. ib. 17. Id. ib. 18. Id. ib. 19. Id. ib.

philosophers and orators, repudiated his two wives on frivolous pretexts, approved the licentious advice given by Cato to young men, advocated and condemned the belief of the immortality of the soul, spoke well against suicide and equally as well in its favor, paid divine honors to his daughter Tullia, and stands strongly and justly suspected of unnatural lust.[20] Consequently, pagan wisdom alone did not much aid those philosophers to virtue. A right estimate of moral philosophy, unsupported by revelation, may be formed by the withering rebuke given it by St. Paul in these words: "They became foolish in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened. For saying that they were wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man. Wherefore, God gave them up to the desires of their hearts, unto uncleanliness: shamefully to abuse their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and as they cared not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, being filled with all iniquity. Who, knowing the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things are worthy of death, and not only they who do them, but they also who consent to the doers."[21] Well, then, could the great St. Augustin exclaim, alluding to the triumphs of revelation and of the Catholic

20. Id. ib.

21. Rom. 1.

Church: "Thanks to our Lord and God who sent us his timely aid. For who could have stood firm—who could have avoided been swept away and tumbled into the abyss by mankind's horrid depravity, if the Cross of Christ, immovably planted on the high rock of authority, had not strengthened us by its unshaken strength. For when the last remnants of primitive morality had faded away, such a flood of corruption and wickedness deluged the earth, that nothing could save mankind but Divine authority."[22.] Would to heaven that the intellects of the nineteenth century would join the gigantic mind of St. Augustin, and would gratefully acknowledge with him the numberless substantial benefits which God, through his church, bestowed on mankind, by redeeming it from the thick darkness of paganism and from the abyss that had ruined so many souls.

But, alas! such grateful appreciation, we fear, is fa from being universal: instead of thanks for being delivered, many seem to disdain to acknowledge the deliverance a favor. Princes who should know better, shut their eyes to the brilliant wisdom beaming from that cross, and impiously tell it that they shall not allow it to shine before their eyes, or to seat in their counsels, which they wish to be exclusively human, rational and anti-christian.

Various and varying Christian associations organize under self-appointed leaders, who deposing their mo-

22. Epist. 138.

ther church from the commission and authority given her, and pledged to her till the end of time by the infallible omnipotence of Christ, call their rebellion freedom of thought. Availing themselves of the same kind of right, many form themselves into societies, to diffuse the lights of reason, to free man, as they say, from the shackles of superstition and the unnatural pretensions of religious authority—in a word, societies aiming at the gradual emancipation of man from the authority of the church and of its Divine Founder. Can the advocates of such societies be the friends of the human race? Are they not the destroyers of the benefits brought to man by the Son of God? Are they not precipitating society into the abyss of depravity described by St. Augustin and St. Paul, as brought about by pagan philosophy or reason emancipated from divine revelation? Was not the Catholic Church the best friend of the human race in substituting christian civilization to the humiliating errors and shocking vices of pagan philosophy? Can she be an enemy to man or to society now in proscribing those secret societies, the ultimate object of which is to free man from the teachings of God? No; she is man's best friend, in speaking to him what is for his temporal and eternal welfare. The Church has been entrusted by the Son of God with his revelation, and has been commanded by him to teach that to all nations. Therefore, she cannot but speak those divine lessons that are for man's good. The worldly-minded

will disdain her, as if too old for our progressive age ; the intolerant will call her intolerant, because truth cannot espouse error ; disobedient children may traduce her, because she cannot be accessory to their rebellion ; and the children of the prince of darkness burn with impious zeal to crush her, because she pleads the cause of God. But she cannot be silent ; she cannot but speak the truths of salvation, to do which she was commissioned by the Lord of heaven and earth. She sees the evils flowing from many secret societies, and she cannot but proscribe them and warn her children to withhold their adherence to them.

Those proscribed secret societies will appear to the superficial observer, and even to thousands of their members, to contain nothing but philanthropy or brotherly love ; but if deeply analyzed, even to their ultimate ends, they will be found most objectionable, chiefly in a religious point of view. For, in the first place, they produce in the Catholic a spirit of indifferentism, which renders his faith half dead, and completely paralyzes his religious life, neutralizing the discharge of his religious duties. Again, they exact oaths and obligations which, when taken, cannot be known to be just, and, consequently, they are rash and criminal, subjecting the Catholic to obey orders and superiors unknown, unauthorized and antagonistic to those assigned to him by his God. Moreover, their exercises, rites and ceremonials, adopted in prefer-

ence to those of the Church, introduce a sort of natural or pagan religion in lieu of christianity. Besides, under the plea of charity, real charity is seriously affected ; for, while this virtue knows no limits, members solemnly pledged to stand by each other will limit, in favor of those by whom they swore to stand; which any one, knowing human nature or the workings of those societies, will see to be practically a philanthropic partiality, not an impartial charity.

But what is most objectionable in those societies is what transpires in the back lodges. The spirit of philanthropy, toleration and non-interference in politics or religion, constantly kept before the eyes of the initiated in the first degrees, gradually changes in the occult lodges into a spirit of intolerant subversion of christianity, and not unfrequently of civil society itself. "The history of the last fifty years (wrote Abbé Glaire,[23]) has developed it to the entire world." During that time the chief leaders were ever at work in devising means for the accomplishing of their motto '*ecrasez l'infame.*' They published articles, periodicals and books subversive of the principles of religion, and infusing materialism and unbelief. "The most of those works which have appeared for this long time past against religion, morals and government, (acknowledged the repenting La Roi, Secretary to one of these societies) were ours, or those of authors devoted to us. We circulated immense numbers of them

23. Abbe Glairé, Encyclop. Cathol.

among the people. These were the means used to pervert the people and bring them to the present state. I shall not see them long, for I shall die of grief and remorse!"[24] They devised and accomplished, to a great extent, the extinction of religious orders, on which they congratulated themselves in these words: "The philosophers sap the foundations of the apostolic throne. A miracle alone could save the Church. She is stricken with a dreadful apoplexy."[25] They disseminated their errors throughout most parts of Europe, particularly through France, where. having deluded the multitudes and swelled the numbers of their members to hundreds of thousands, they easily succeeded in overturning the altars, profaning the temples, abolishing God's festivals, and in having His holy throne audaciously occupied by the impure Venus, to receive the guilty incense of the new adorers of the goddess Reason. One of the leaders, exulting over the impious triumph, exclaimed: "Here at length, it is permitted openly to proclaim the right, so long disused, of reducing all opinions to the standard of our own reason. Man learns with a certain pride, that he is not designed by nature to believe on the affirmation of others; and the superstitions of antiquity, the degradation of reason in the frenzy of a supernatural faith, are vanished from society as they were from philosophy."[26] The same avowal was then freely and openly made by many members in these

24. Barruel, vol, 1. ch. 17.
25. Id. ib. ch. 5.
26. Condorcet Sketch on the Progress of the Mind, epoch 9.

words: "Yes, at length the grand object of Freemasonry is accomplished: Equality and Liberty; all men are equal and brothers; all men are free. That was the whole substance of our doctrine, the object of our wishes, the whole of our grand secret."[27] The same can be gathered from the religious part at the conferring of the degree of Elect, the secret of which is "to re-establish religious equality, to exhibit all men equally, Priests and Pontifs, to recall the brethren to natural religion, and to persuade them that the religion of Moses and of Christ had violated religious liberty and equality by the distinction of Priests and Laity."[28] The main object is made still clearer in the degree of Rosicrucian, in which the candidate is taught that Christ is no God, but simply a common Jew, crucified for his crimes (!)[29] who destroyed the religion of nature by the introduction of the gospel, which the next degree of the Knights of Kadosch is intended to overthrow.[30]

If we advance farther, we will discover the Society of Illuminism, coalescing with the above, and adding to their aims a stronger wish for the destruction of all civil society. In that the candidate is expected by the Order to bind himself under oath by engagements unknown to him, to grant to the Order the power of life and death, to promise blind obedience, even if he should see something wicked or un-

27. Barruel, vol. 2, ch. 9. 28. Id. ib. ch. 10. 29. Id. ib.
30. Id. ib.

just to be done, and to support the Order by his counsels, his money, and all other means.[31] He is taught that *the empire of the Order must be propagated in Secret Societies*;[32] that it is *counteracted by the Priesthood*;[33] that *the hands of those who resist must be tied, and that finally force must succeed to the invisible power of secret union*;[34] that it *must encompass the Powers of the earth with a legion of indefatigable men, seeking to acquire those places which give power*;[35] that the *civil constitutions of States offer but little aid* to the grand object in view, because *fear and violence are their grand engines*; that the freedom and happiness of man demand that each be his own prince and his own priest, with no other *Book of Laws* than *Reason only*;[36] that *Christ did not establish a new religion, but simply reinstated natural religion in its rights*, and *that this religion, so simple in itself, was afterwards defaced, but that by means of inviolable secresy, it has been transmitted in purity to us through Freemasonry*;[37] that *these mysterious associations render men more indifferent as to the interests of governments; they bring men of divers nations and religions within the same bond of union; they deprive the church and state of their ablest and most laborious members. By this method they undermine the foundations of States. In proportion as these new associations or secret societies, formed in different States, shall*

31. True Illuminée, Original Writings, vol. 1, sec. 15.
32. Discourse of the Initiator to the degree of Major Illuminé.
33. Code of the Lodge, entitled "A general view of the system of the Order."
34. Discourse on the Mysteries. 35. Code of the Lodge.
36. Discourse of the President for the Degree of Epopt. 37. Ib.

acquire strength and prudence at the expense of the former ones (civil society), the latter must weaken and insensibly fall. The spark may long remain hidden in the ashes, but the day must come in which shall burst forth the general flame, and nature shall restore that dignity to man for which he was destined from the beginning.[38]

Such are the unmistakable avowals in the lessons given by the initiator to the initiated. And the same objects of the Society may be clearly inferred from the deliberations taken at their General Congress, held at Wilhelmsbad, in 1782, at which concurred thousands of members from all parts of Europe, and also from America, and in which one of the chief measures was to generalize and consummate the degree of Rosicrucian, which attacks the divinity of Christ.[39] The same is clearly seen from the juridical declarations taken in the Court of Munich by order of the King of Bavaria, in 1785, and from the seizure of the Archives of the Society, containing their letters, discourses, rules, projects and statutes, published afterwards by order of the Court under the title of "Original writings of the order and sect of the Illuminated." The same may be also inferred from Carlile's Manual of Masonry; from M. Picot's Ecclesiatical Memoirs; from Frederick Schlegel, who, alluding to the Masonic Order, says: "Any secret spiritual association, diffused at once amongst Christians and Mahometans, cannot be of a very

38. Ib.
39. Barruel 4, ch. 4.

christian nature. Nay, the very idea of an esoteric society for the propagation of any secret doctrines is not compatible with the very principle of christianity itself * * (Their secresy) would be to constitute a church within a church—a measure to be as little tolerated or justified as an *imperium in imperio*. And such a secret church would unquestionably, as experience has already proved, be very soon transformed into a secret directory for political changes and revolutions.[40] The same may be learned from Professor Robison, of Edinburg, formerly a Freemason, in his work, "Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the established Religions and Governments of Europe;" also, from the precious work of Abbé Le Franc—"Conspiracy Unveiled,"—who, for having revealed those mysteries, was killed, with many other holy priests, at the Convent of Carmel, in Paris, the 2d of September, 1792; and all can be seen as clearly as noonlight in the Memoirs of Abbé Barruel, who happened to have free access to the Archives of the Lodges; and for the publication of whose works to the Spanish people the saintly Monseigneur Strauch, Bishop of our native diocese, was ruffianly shot on the public highway from Barcelona to Tarragona, in 1822.

We could continue to adduce proofs from the most incontestable sources, but we dislike to tax your patience any longer. The arguments brought forth

40. Philos. of Hist. p. 456.

ought to be fully sufficient to convince every impartial man that the societies alluded to aim, in their ultimate designs, at the overthrow of Christianity and civil society. We are far from meaning that such is the object of every member belonging to them; on the contrary, we believe that thousands of them, particularly in our country, belong only to the first degrees, are utterly ignorant of the ultimate aims of their Order, and would scout any one inviting them to espouse such designs. Yet they are members of a society which upholds such objects: they are in degrees, which introduce to higher ones advocating those aims, to which they may be promoted, if they can be made indifferent enough to every principle inculcated by divine revelation: they have superiors who long to advance them to such honors, and who may one day exact from them deeds incompatible with Christianity. And as a man who would enter a dark cavern without a lantern, might easily fall into deep and fatal precipices; so they, who enter blindfolded those societies, which most carefully conceal from them their ulterior secrets and designs (really irreligious and antisocial), cannot expect but fatal spiritual injury. Hence the Catholic Church, knowing the frightful precipices of those cavernous systems, could not, as the best guardian of Christianity and the best friend of society, abstain from warning society, and from prohibiting her children from joining those associations. In presenting these observations we may be called imprudent, per-

haps uncharitable ; but we protest to friends and foes that it is to obey the dictates of love to both that we speak what we deem our duty ; while such considerations should not deter us from conveying to our people the just prohibitions of the Church, or from warning all under our charge to refrain from ties incompatible with their Christian character and Catholic obligations. Worldly interest may be as fairly tempting and delightfully inviting as the apparently inoxious apple held out to our first parents ; but in the end it will prove equally fatal. Wordly interest will fade away ; but docile submission to the divinely constituted authority of the Church will sing eternal victories.

Finally let us be permitted to add with the illustrious Bishop of Orleans—the world-renowned Dupanloup, that the signs of the times are bad, and irreligion is becoming more daring and destructive. Therefore we implore all to send up constant prayers to heaven, humbly and earnestly beseeching the God of all mercy to disarm impiety, to recall the erring to the unity of faith, and to inspire all hearts with a sincere desire to serve his Divine Majesty with unswerving fidelity and Christian perfection. For this purpose, in addition to other required prayers, we direct that the Litany of the Blessed Virgin be publicly recited in every church of this diocese every Sunday during the approaching Ecumenical Council, to solicit also the mighty intercession of her, who is the spotless temple of the Holy Ghost, and to whom the Son of

God himself was subject even before her glorious Assumption to her throne in Heaven.[41]

Moreover, in order to comply with the decrees of Baltimore, we also direct that after the receipt of this, and after due notice, the annual collection for the Holy Father be taken up in all our churches; that thus, accompanied by your prayers and your gifts, we may safely go, and safely return to you with the priceless blessings of the Vicar of Christ and the heavenly counsels of the Bishops of the world, confirmed by the Chair of St. Peter.

"Brethren, pray for us. * * And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and do not keep company with him. * * Yet do not esteem him as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother. * * The Lord be with you all.[42]

Your devoted and humble servant in Christ,

✠ JOSEPH SADOC, O. P.,

Archbishop of San Francisco.

San Francisco, Octave day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, 1869.

41. Luke 2:51.
42. 1 Thessal. 5:25; and 2 Thessal. 3:14, 15, 16.

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